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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001061

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2014

TAGS: [EPET](#) [EWWT](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTRY FLOATS IDEA FOR VOLUNTARY
REDUCTION OF OIL TRANSPORT THROUGH THE STRAITS

Classified by Econ Counsleor Scot Marciel, for reasons 1.5
(b) and (d).

1. (C) MFA Director General for Energy Haki Akil told us the Foreign Ministry is launching a new initiative to reduce the transport of petroleum and refined products through the Turkish Straits. MFA is testing the interest of oil companies in an agreement on voluntary principles that would commit the oil companies to ship all or part of their oil and refined products through pipelines, bypassing the Straits. Akil admitted the task would be difficult, because all of the oil companies that currently ship through the Straits would need to agree in order to avoid the free-rider problem. He said BP, ChevronTexaco and Exxon/Mobil had shown interest in the idea, but admitted that selling the idea to the Russian oil companies would be more difficult.

2. (C) The Straits agreement outlined by Akil is based on the model used by BTC to reach agreement on voluntary principles on human rights and security, and like the BTC agreement, would also include interested NGOs. He said that the MFA is just beginning to explore the idea and therefore, he could not predict many of the details of such an agreement. He added that the MFA would like U.S. support for the initiative. Comment: Although we have verified that some western oil companies are interested in the idea, we (and they) are skeptical that Akil will make much headway with the Russian companies.
EDELMAN